The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society's

EXCITER

March 2007 Issue No. 432

LOOK INSIDE FOR DETAILS:

- The RARS General Meeting is the 1st Tuesday of each month.
- The RARS net meets every night @ 8 pm on 146.64.
- The RARS Technical and Trader's net is Saturdays @ 8:30 pm or following the RARS net.
- RARS meets for a monthly dinner on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Dick Bitner W8HYD, RARS President, passed away Monday, February 19th at age 65. Our condolences and sympathy go out to his family and friends.

Dick Bitner: A Loving Tribute

Article by Scott Bitner, son of the late Dick Bitner, RARS President

I would like to open by thanking all those hams who came to Dad's funeral last Thursday. He would have been moved by that tribute. While I was in the receiving line, I was approached by Martin Brossman, who asked me to write to him concerning some of Dad's adventures in radio. I agreed and here are the results. I hope you find them entertaining, enlightening, and instructional.

My earliest memories of Dad and radio go back to when I was three or four. We had just moved into an apartment in Kent, Ohio, and I remember Dad setting up his shack. It was the corner of their bedroom which was probably all of 12x12. He had a small table with his Heathkit 6er and 2er – some of you older hams may remember these "lunchbox rigs." I remember him talking and listening long into the night while he was studying.

A couple years later we bought a house in Munroe Falls, and Dad joined the Cuyahoga Falls Radio Club. It was then that he started his career of mentoring. His protégé was Mike Young, and Dad took him under his wing. Mike became a fixture of our lives for more than a decade and, as far as I know, lives only a block from our old house. The last I saw, there was an antenna farm behind that (Continued on page 8)

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Dick Bitner Benevolent Fund. Proceeds from this fund will be used for amateur radio education for kids. Dick loved working with youth and getting them interested in the hobby.

Dick Bitner Benevolent Fund
P.O. Box 17188
Raleigh, NC 27619

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The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc. (RARS) was founded in 1969 and continues to serve and support the Amateur Radio community in the greater Triangle area. In 1999, the society incorporated a new RARS and obtained 501(c)(3) non-profit tax status.

The objectives of the club are to promote worldwide friendship through amateur radio; to be of public service by providing radio communications in times of disaster, emergency, or civic need; to educate members in radio technique; and to provide training classes to assist in obtaining amateur radio licenses.

Anyone interested in amateur radio is eligible to apply for membership. Due for regular licensed amateurs are $18 per year (from July 1 through June 30). Additional immediate family members pay $5 each per year. Dues for licensed amateurs older than 59 or younger than 16 are $12 per year. Dues for non-licensed associate members are $9 per year.

Applications for membership may be obtained from the treasurer or the RARS web site (RARS.org).

The *Exciter*

The *Exciter* is the official newsletter of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society. It appears each month as a PDF on the RARS website at www.rars.org. Members receive email notification when the latest version is available. Please provide your email address to the Treasurer.

The *Exciter* welcomes articles, advertising, and other contributions. To submit a piece to the newsletter, please contact the Editor.

The views expressed in the *Exciter* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or RARS. The Editor reserves the right to edit any and all pieces.

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Special VE Testing in March

Announcement by Joe White WA4GIR, Contact VE for the RARS VE Team

The RARS VE Team will be conducting a testing session at the RARS meeting on Tuesday, March 6th @ 7:30pm at the Forest Hills Baptist Church on Dixie Trail in Raleigh.

We normally conduct exams quarterly at the RARS meetings in February, May, August, and November; however, with the new rules taking effect on Feb. 23 removing the requirement for morse code, we will be conducting this special session for people wishing to upgrade at an earlier date.

This session will be conducted in the same manner as all our test sessions. Applications for "paperwork only" upgrades (persons with CSCEs for General and/or Extra written exams) will be accommodated as well as people who would like to take exams. Bring a photo ID, your original license, and a copy of any licenses or CSCEs that you wish to use for claiming credit for previously passed elements. The test fee is $14. The fee is required for both "paperwork only" upgrades and persons taking exams.

See you there!

VE Testing

The RARS VEs will accept walk-in testing at the February, May, August, and November RARS meetings; the RARSfest in April; the Cary Swapfest in July; the JARSfest in November; and folloing RARS license classes.

Please bring a photo ID, your current license, a copy of your current license, and any CSCEs you have for credit. Visit www.rars.org for more information.

RARS General Meeting

Date: First Tuesday of each month

Location: Forest Hills Baptist Church
201 Dixie Trail
Raleigh, NC 27607

Time: People begin arriving at 7 pm.
The meeting officially starts

RARS Monthly Dinner

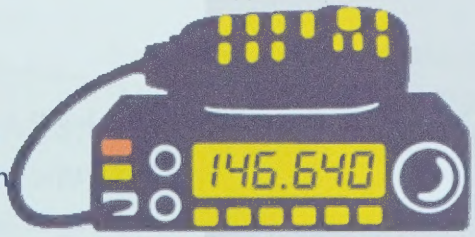
Join us on the 2nd Tuesday of each month for the RARS dinner. It's open to everyone: RARS members, non-members, friends, and family — feel free to bring your little ones!

Golden Corral @ 6129 Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh. Dinner begins at 6:30 pm.

RARS Repeaters in Raleigh

145.13 (82.5 PL)
146.64
444.525 (82.5 PL)

Join us for the nightly RARS net @ 8 pm on the 146.64. All hams holding a Technician class license or higher are invited to check-in. We welcome both RARS and non-RARS members to the net.



Public Service Opportunities

Odyssey of the Mind Eastern Region Tournament
Saturday, March 3 @ 7 am – 3 pm (times are approximate)
Wakefield High School and Middle School
Equipment needed: 2 meter HT, earphones, pencil and paper.
Silly hats, an Odyssey of the Mind tradition, are optional.
Coordinator: Brian Young KA9QJT ka9qjt@hotmail.com
*Volunteers needed.

2007 MS Walk in RTP
Saturday, March 24 @ 8 am – 12 pm (times are approximate)
RTP
Equipment needed: 2 meter HT, earphones, pencil and paper.
*Coordinator and radio volunteers needed.
Contact Dick KD4ISC kd4isc@arrl.net

Odyssey of the Mind State Tournament
Saturday, March 31 @ 7 am – 3 pm (times are approximate)
Leesville High, Middle, and Elementary Schools
Equipment needed: 2 meter HT, earphones, pencil and paper.
Silly hats, an Odyssey of the Mind tradition, are optional.
*Coordinator and radio volunteers needed.
Contact Dick KD4ISC kd4isc@arrl.net

Visit the RARS website for up-to-the-minute announcements, current information, and special features at www.rars.org.

Another Year Older...and Better!

Some things just get better with age — and RARS is no exception.

Join us Tuesday, March 6th for the annual RARS birthday celebration. It's sure to be a fun evening!

We'll begin serving refreshments at 7pm. The meeting will then start at 7:30pm.

The evening's program will consist of two parts. First, Chuck Littlewood K4HF, ARRL Liaison, will conduct the annual award ceremony. Following this presentation, Hank Montgomery K4HM, RARS Hamfest Chair, will provide information about the upcoming RARSFEST 2007.

Please note that the meeting will be held in the upstairs room at the Forest Hills Baptist Church. VE testing is also available at this meeting.

2007 RARSFEST Dinner

Hey, folks! It's hamfest time again: March 31-April 1. Part of the hamfest includes our annual hamfest dinner for vendors, dealers, and other attendees – including you! The dinner will be held on Saturday, March 31st from 7 to 8:15pm.

We will be in a new location at the State Fairgrounds this year. The dinner (and hamfest) will be in the Exposition Center next to the Jim Graham Building.

As always, the dinner largely depends on the generosity of RARS members. The club will provide the meat, drinks, and utensils for the meal. We would like club members to donate vegetable dishes, casseroles, salads, and desserts. This potluck method has worked well in the past, and we hope it will continue to be successful this year.

Both store-bought and homemade items are welcome. Whatever you can contribute will be appreciated. Please note that we do not have the capability to keep items hot or cold; your packaging will need to reflect that.

Please bring dishes to the Exposition Center by 6pm on March 31st. There will be signs directing you to the dinner location within the building.

Club members and their families have always been generous in supporting the RARSFEST dinner. Thanks so much for your help in continuing this tradition.

For more information, contact Mary Jo Littlewood K4MJL, Hamfest Social Chairman.

Let's Get Going with Public Service!

Article by Dick Orander KD4ISC, RARS Secretary

Zero! That's the number of folks who signed the public service volunteer sheet at the last RARS meeting — a disappointing number from a club of over 225 members which claims to be public service oriented. Are we all too busy to help with a Saturday event? Are we no longer interested in public service? Do you think a fellow ham will volunteer so you won't have to? I hope the answer to these questions is NO!

There are a dedicated 6 to 8 RARS members who can be routinely counted on for covering our public service events. These folks commit their time as soon as the event is announced. Unfortunately, most events require a dozen or more hams to provide effective communications support. While the demand for help has increased, the number of those willing to obligate their time has decreased. Attempts to organize hams representing 5% of our membership are laborious and take on the characteristics of a nagging in-law — a situation that is neither pleasant for the coordinator nor for those listening.

To those who are not physically able, are truly time restricted, or who just aren't interested, consider yourselves excused. For the rest of us, let's get going!

A typical public service event is fun and easy. Once you sign up, you'll be given an assignment as a radio operator. Typically, you may be stationed at a rest stop, monitor the course in a SAG (Support And Gear) vehicle or assigned to shadow an event official. Your job is to relay information. Some jobs are busier than others, but usually there's just enough radio chatter to keep things interesting. You are typically fed during these events. You'll get to meet interesting people and see exciting activities. Many events provide t-shirts, hats, or pins. All provide good feelings when the day is done and almost endless "thank-you's" from the event staff. What a great way to do a good deed and play radio at the same time.

So, how about it? Give those public service opportunities you're always hearing about a serious thought and sign up....at least once. I'll bet you'll be back for more.

See page 4 for a list of upcoming public service opportunities!

Welcome New RARS Members!

Perry Hashemi	N2NDT
Ken McEwen	KI4OTO
Hal Spencer	K4NKR
Carol Taylor	KI4TRH

Hamfest Calendar

March 10-11	NC ARRL Section Convention Charlotte, NC
March 25	Down East Hamfest Kinston, NC
April 1	NC ARRL State Convention Raleigh, NC
April 15	Hamfest Chesapeake, VA
April 21	Catawba Valley Hamfest Morganton, NC

Dates courtesy of *SERA Repeater Journal* and other sources. If you would like your even listed in the *Exciter*, please contact the Editor.

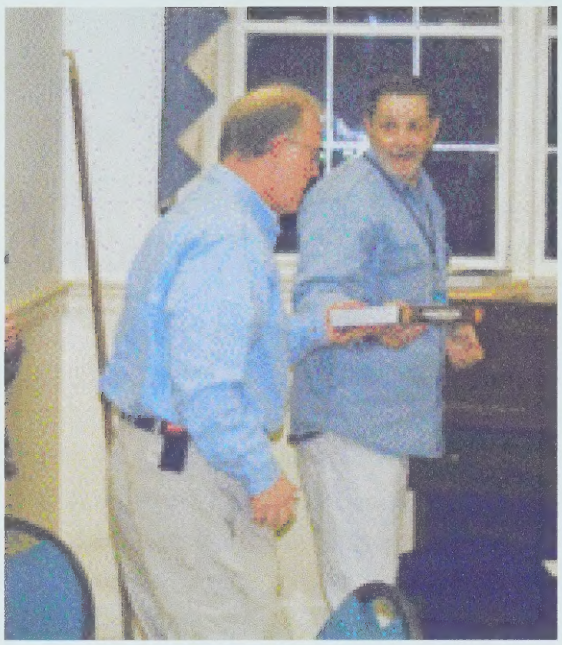
March Birthdays

Bob	N4VQN	3/5
Sharon	KD4ACK	3/6
Noble	N4UOQ	3/6
Jay	NT4D	3/8
James	KC9VJ	3/8
Bruce	WA9NEW	3/8
Jim	WA5APR	3/10
Bob	KC4CPD	3/10
Tom	N4TAB	3/10
Bob	WA4ZZN	3/12
David	KF4VXJ	3/12
Larry	K4LXV	3/17
Eddie	WK4I	3/18
Bill	K4WGE	3/20
Dave	K4LKN	3/21
Carl	W4HJZ	3/23
Greg	KE4PAX	3/23
David	KI4PUT	3/25
BJ	KD4ZVS	3/26
Peg	KB1HVA	3/28
BJ	NC4BJ	3/29

January 2007 RARS Net Reports

RARS Two Meter Traffic/Ragchew Net
Check-ins: 483
Traffic: 33/30
Minutes: 749
Sessions: 31

Special Interest Nets
Check-ins: 70
Minutes: 470
Sessions: 13



house. Mike and Dad spent hours discussing theory, building kit radios, trading, and putting up antennas. When Dad decided he wanted a tower, he found one (I think he traded) – and a host of people showed up to raise it. He'd already dug the hole at the rear of the house against the foundation and had the tower itself bolted together. He had a rotor installed. I don't know why it took all day to put it up then – it could be because of a liquid that was a mystery to me then: amber/red and white. A year or so later, he installed another antenna on the garage roof. The problem was that we were in the approach path for the local university airfield. Dad was likely OK with the height, but I remember a Piper J3 Cub clipping it with a wheel one afternoon. I also remember calls from neighbors about interference on their TVs. The most unusual call came one frigid winter night – a night of high winds and a full moon in a cloudless sky. She asked if we were aware that there was a UFO hovering over our house. It seems that the winds were so fierce that the antenna was not just turning, but also spinning, and the reflection from the full moon made it look like a disk!

Dad was always trading and collecting equipment. Once he traded for a linear amplifier. Every time he keyed the mike, the lights in the house dimmed noticeably. When he was using his key, the lights would flash along with the CW he was sending. The cabinet for the linear was the stand for an awesome array of gear from Heathkit, Hallicrafters, Ranger, and Drake. I used to hang out in the room he used for his shack, listening. There was a bed in there, and I would sometimes fall asleep to his voice contacting distant places like Australia.

Dad loved to go to ham gatherings to trade, buy, and swap yarns with people that he'd met by voice. I remember going to the big hamvention in Dayton, Ohio one year. Thousands of hams were there, and we were camping at a local KOA with a group that Dad had started called the "Camper's Net." One of the guys didn't know where he was driving his tent stakes and accidentally punctured a campground water line. When we went out to breakfast, Mom drove in and helped the waitress serve coffee. We also went to many smaller gatherings in Findlay, Ohio. I think that was where Dad first saw and fell in love with Yaesu radios. All I know for sure is that one day, a bunch of gear was gone, and in their place was a singe transceiver-an FT 101 E.

Field Days with the Falls club were always busy and exciting. We had a tent or trailer for each band, and the airport (the one next door) would turn into a temporary communications hub for that long weekend in June. One of the temporary shacks was a disaster relief truck that the Red Cross let us use. I think it was for the 2 meter team. Well, one of the other kids and I were pretending to drive it, and we must have turned on one of the accessory switches because the battery died. Dad was not amused, but the club had done well on contacts that year, so he wasn't too mad. Another club activity was the rabbit hunt. A club member was designated as the rabbit and had to take a mobile rig and hide, in his car, within a designated area, say 5x5 miles. The rabbit would then transmit for one minute

in ten. The other hams were "hounds" and had to find the rabbit using loop antennas. I think there was a time limit of 3 hours. Dad was the rabbit several times and I always went with him on these summer afternoon games.

When I was ten, I noticed a moving van a couple doors down the street. There were two station wagons in the drive, and both had Michigan plates with call signs on them. The Nicholas Family had arrived – and with it, a lifelong friendship with another ham. Nelson had more stuff than Dad, and they were constantly sharing and working together. The summer of '76, Dad, Nelson, and a couple others decided to do their own thing for Field Day and got permission to set up in the parking lot of the Junior High next door. The problem was setting up antennas. The solution was a bow and an arrow with a messenger line attached. Shoot the arrow over the top of a light standard and attach the wire to the messenger, then pull it over the top. We used Nelson's tent trailer for a shack and had loads of fun. That spring, I tried to get my novice license. I could send at 25 and receive at 20, but even with Dad coaching, I failed the test by one question. I could tell Dad was a little sad, but he didn't push the issue.

By this time the shack had moved into the basement. We'd divided it up into two rooms with my grandmother living in one room and Dad using the other for his radios. He drilled a hole through the basement wall and ran his antenna cables through. For a few years all was well. One day, I went in there to get a can of soup out of the pantry cupboard and noticed a yellow jacket drifting around. Then another. And another! Seems Dad forgot to seal the opening with putty.

A few years after this, I went to the Falls Club annual auction and flea market. I was a freshman in college, and I was looking for something unique to do on campus. There, sitting on a table, was an old Drake 2B with speaker box. I was in love and paid the man his asking price of $110. When I showed it to Dad a little later, he was pleased with the purchase and even asked if he could borrow it from time to time. I still have it, but it's missing the audio amplifier tube. Dad showed me how to use it, and I spent long hours studying with the old mono headphones listening to international broadcasts and CW. Since I didn't have space for an antenna, Dad suggested I hook a wire from the screwdown antenna lead to the ground screw of the plug over my desk. My dorm building was my antenna, thanks to Dad's wisdom. Throughout all this, Dad was teaching kids and adults the mysteries of radio, setting up phone patch communications for exchange students, and participating in SKYWARN.

When my family moved to N.C., Dad continued these activities, and the legacy of his desire to help others is manifest in the people who came to us at the funeral and thanked us. If you want to be a part of this tradition, you could contribute to the foundation established in his name, or, even better, find some bright, bored, kid who needs an outlet for his energy, talent, and imagination – take that kid under your wing and mentor, mentor, mentor!

Dad would approve.

RARSFEST 2007

Article by Hank Montogmery K4HM, RARS Hamfest Chair

The 35th annual RARSfest will take place on Sunday, April 1, 2007 at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds' new Exposition Center, just a few feet away from the Jim Graham Building that has been its home in recent years. The RARSfest planning committee has been concerned with the high cost and the amount of unused space in the Jim Graham building for several years. We expect that the Exposition Center will be less expensive and provide a more attractive home for RARSfest. You can see a picture of the Exposition Center by visiting the website. Just go to http://www.rars.org and click the hamfest link.

RARSfest will be the ARRL North Carolina State Convention this year. Because RARSfest is a state convention, ARRL HQ will provide a guest speaker — QST Technical Editor, Joel Hallas W1ZR, will present a program on "Ham Radio's Digital Communication Modes and Techniques." The new digital modes and digital radios are a hot topic today, so we expect this to be a popular program.

As an ARRL Special Service Club, we are committed to the development and training of new hams. To support these commitments, we will again include the Fox Hunt, J-pole antenna construction table, and Special Event Station where guests can earn a certificate by operating under the callsign N4C.

RARSfest needs YOUR help!

We all need to spread the word about RARSfest. When someone is curious about what you do as an Amateur Radio Operator, be sure to include RARSfest in your answer. Invite them to come and operate our Special Event Station, meet and talk with other hams, listen to the information on digital communications, and get (Continued on next page)

New Horizons

supervised hands-on experience with a soldering iron. Whenever you check into a net, work a station on HF, visit an electronics store, or even just ragchew on the repeaters, work RARSfest into the conversation. Be proud of it — we are one of the largest and best hamfests in this part of the county.

And as always, there is plenty of work to be done the weekend of the fest. Setup in the past has started on Friday and continues through Saturday afternoon. This year the fairgrounds is experiencing higher occupancy rates because the Convention Center is not available, and they have warned us that if they get a rental request for Friday, then we will not be able to start our setup until Saturday. In that case, we will have a busy morning on Saturday getting the building ready for our flea market and commercial dealers.

Again this year, Saturday evening will give everyone a chance to take a breather, relax a bit, and enjoy the famous social/supper organized by Mary Jo Littlewood. This has always been a BIG favorite of our vendors. While RARSfest provides the meat for this event, we ask that club members bring a covered dish. For more information about the dinner, please see page 5. And there are of course many opportunities to help out on Sunday.

Please visit http://rars.org/hamfest/helpwanted.html to volunteer a few hours of your time. If we all pitch in a few hours, there will be plenty of time for everyone to enjoy the fest and still get the work done. We will have a worker party/picnic again this year for all of those who volunteer.

For more information, please contact me anytime.
K4HM@arrl.net
Home phone: (919) 577-1254
Cell phone: (919) 818-7455

Memories of Dick Bitner

Tribute by Martin Brossman KI4CFS

Though Dick had health challenges, that will not be the memory I have of him – even talking to him on the phone the night before he become a "silent key" (a term in Ham Radio to honor hams that have passed on). When I remember Dick, I think of hope, vitality, a desire to help, the courage to ask for help, an active mind, and a man that moved through life with compassion.

My last memory of Dick was when I talked with him on the phone Sunday night while he was in the hospital. He was glad I called, and I gave him an update on the Richmond Hamfest. I then talked about my plans for getting my next radio license on Saturday, and then how I was going to take the Extra test. He encouraged me to go all the way and enjoyed hearing what was going in my life the way – the way he always did. I said we would have to figure out how to get him radio access from his bed. He said, "That won't be a problem. Just bring the cable in through the window, and then figure out how to close the window enough." We chatted more about some changes I had made to my radio equipment and about things he was looking forward to when he got home. I then felt it was important that he talk to my wife Barbara KI4GMU. Dick was the first person she talked to on the radio when she got her license. They talked about his experience in the hospital, the fact that his daughter Heidi was in the same hospital, and about the latest news on Dick's global warming training. I told him to take care and that I looked forward to getting together when he got out of the hospital. I said I would call him Monday evening. Though he was weak, he sounded lively and upbeat – the way he always was. I told him how much he meant to us and that we needed him to get well fast! I think something bigger than both of us had other plans. He became a silent key before I could call back the next night.

I have learned two things from my years of volunteering with hospitalized cancer patients. When people are extremely ill, make sure to let them know how important they are to you, what a difference they have made in your life, and how much you care about them while you can, for you never know when it may become harder to reach them. The other thing is that I personally believe when people that pass on, that they somehow can hear us – so it's still worth the effort. It seems to me that death is less painful if I take time to feel the loss and remember all the wonders of their life. That was easy with Dick, for like Barbara said, we know he is going to a great place!

His wife Molly knew how important the ham radio family was to Dick, and I was honored when she asked Charles Murray me to share what was going on over the net.

Though difficult, I was also honored to announce his passing, for I respected him so much. Molly mentioned that it was a shame he did not get to talk more on his new antenna. I told her that in the world of ham radio, part of the victory is simply getting that big antenna up in the air and working! He accomplished that!

He also accomplished a number of other things lately. One was being honored with the responsibility to give the latest information pertaining to the slowing of global warming. He completed a business training course I gave and was a great asset to the class. He was President of our local amateur radio society was VERY proud of that. He had started to develop a team of new business allies to create a whole new business opportunity that would help him and others. Those are just a few of the things I know about, and I am sure there are many more.

When I met his son, Scott, at the funeral and mentioned that I was a ham radio friend, that seemed to spark something within him. He told me how he grew up with ham radio friends. Scott reminisced, "I grew up around ham radio and just saw it as part of life. I remember the lights dimming in the house when dad would turn the linear amplifiers on." He was encouraged to take the test many times but just seemed to be to busy with life, but now he wants to take it right away! He also plans on taking a few of his dad's key radios back with him and hopes to even reclaim his father's call sign. I told him that there were a lot of hams in this area who were good friend with his dad and would be glad to help him.

I also learned at the funeral that Dick was a Free Mason. The Masonic last rights ceremony at the funeral was quite moving and was delivered with clear love and respect. Each of Dick's children spoke of him as being as great a father. They shared stories of him working long hours but always being there for them.

To me, Dick was a walking example of a man who was committed to making a difference in other people's lives. He was a man with heart, strength, and compassion – a calming force that made a difference in my life. I intend to take his commitment of making a difference into my life as a reminder to do the same. All that knew Dick are better people for it. And I will miss him.

What IS a Hamfest?

Article by Hank Montogmery K4HM, RARS Hamfest Chair

Hams have always loved to swap equipment, and I suspect the original hamfests grew from those roots. I can imagine something like a gathering at the old country store with hams sitting around talking about their exploits and swapping more stories than equipment. Back in the day, the number of amateur radio operators grew as equipment manufacturing became more industrialized – making parts and equipment more readily available. With that growth, those country store gatherings probably became more organized; clubs would have been formed; and hamfests would be born – probably more like what we call a "Swap-fest" today. But I imagine that the equipment was always just the excuse. The real enjoyment was in things like the fellowship – the chance to put a face with the voice of that guy from the next county that you have talked to but never met – the opportunity to brag to your buddy about that DX contact you made with 2 watts – or how much better your antenna is working now that you modified the -----, whatever it was. I hope you get the picture. At least that's how I've always imagined it!

Now fast forward about 40-50 years.

My first two hamfests were in the mid 1970s and were as different as night and day. One was Dayton – THE BIG ONE, and the other was sponsored by my local club in Louisville, KY and held at a county fairground where we tromped through the mud between tables and small outbuildings. While I
probably bought something at each of them, I don't remember what it was anymore today. What I do remember is the fellowship, the opportunity see what other hams were doing, and learning more of what ham radio was all about.

At Dayton there were many exhibits, manufacturers, forums and meetings. I remember walking the flea market and asking lots of questions, and everyone was ready to explain what their widget was used for and how it was just what I needed. And even if some of the answers were just so much sales pitch, I was still having fun and learning quite a bit in the process.

The Louisville club's event was more like the swapfests we see today. We didn't have any commercial dealers, much less manufacturers, and we didn't have facilities for forums or meetings. But there was plenty of one on one Elmer-ing to be had, stories to be heard, and new friends to make. Now that I think about it, there was one exhibit – a stand near the road that was set up similar to field day with the intention of attracting some public attention and hopefully some new hams. Like many hamfests of that era, the Louisville fest grew tremendously over the next decade, outgrowing a National Guard Armory, moving to a small wing, a larger wing of the Exposition Center at the KY State Fairgrounds, and by

the late 80's, moving to the Louisville Convention Center. But even with the success of the Louisville hamfest, I still have fond memories of spending many Saturday mornings even into the 80's at gatherings reminiscent of those country stores – at a Louisville radio and electronics repair shop owned by a ham – but I digress.

Now lets fast-forward another 25 years to the 21st century.

Today there is less reason to search out equipment at a hamfest. Due to miniaturization, most hams today don't have the required tools to work on their equipment so they don't need the used parts from the flea market. They can often buy new equipment online for the same price they get at a hamfest or for less. Since sales of new equipment at hamfests have fallen, the manufacturers and new equipment dealers are losing interest in hamfests, causing decreased attendance (which further decreases sales, completing a vicious circle). And everyone is pressed for time today. So if the material benefits aren't there, time is not allocated for hamfests and attendance drops again.

Now back to my original question – What IS a Hamfest?

Everyone will have their own answer, but to me a hamfest is mostly a social event. Yes, you all know that Selene and I go to a lot of hamfests and sell small computer accessories. But that just provides an excuse to go – it doesn't usually provide enough income to pay expenses. However, we get to sit and watch the multitudes come past our table – many of them stop and talk, even if we don't know them, some even come in and "sit a spell." I'm still not too old to learn from their stories, and sometimes I even get to do a little Elmer-ing myself. Hamfests have given me a chance to meet a lot of folks I would otherwise have only heard on the radio. Beyond that, I have made many hamfest friends that I have never even heard on the radio. And I usually have some used equipment with which to practice the age old ham tradition of horse trading, so I usually come home with a new/used toy to play with and then take to the next hamfest, or swapfest, or auction, or…..

Now it's your turn.

Stop and think about what you liked most about the hamfests you remember. I'll bet it was the friends you were with, the friends you made, the neat toys you saw, the meeting or forum you attended, the chance to talk to someone who had some equipment or experience you wanted information about, or maybe getting some hands on experience with something new. All of that and more awaits you right around the corner – at a hamfest. Why not relax, slow down, and come enjoy the next one?

73 es Happy Hamfesting,

Board Meeting - January 2007

Minutes of the RARS Board of Meeting for January 2007

The Board of Directors meeting of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society was conducted on January 16, 2007 at the Forest Hills Baptist Church located on Dixie Trail.

Attendance: Board – Dick Bitner W8HYD, Gary Pearce KN4AQ, Charlie Swindell WB4DCM, Hank Montgomery K4HM, Selene Montgomery KG4RMT, Rod Thomson KI4LSN, Steve Worley KB4HDQ, Chuck Littlewood K4HF, Mary Jo Littlewood K4MJL, Jeff Wittich AC4ZO, Courtney Enzor KI4HOS, Virginia Enzor NC4VA, Greg Seamster KE4PAX and Dick Orander KD4ISC. Others – Bobbie Wittich KD4ZVW and Cliff Broughton AG4XR.

President Dick Bitner W8HYD, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

On a motion from Hank K4HM and a second from Chuck K4HF, the November Board meeting minutes were approved as presented.

There was discussion about the notification requirement being met for the special Board meeting held in January. The group agreed the meeting was legitimate and there was no intention to exclude anyone. On a motion from Chuck K4HF and a second from Selene KG4RMT, the January special Board meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Treasurer's report – Greg KE4PAX advised there were 228 RARS members.

Vice President's report – Selene KG4RMT informed the group that the February program will be conducted by Wayne Starnes KU4V on the 3Y0X Peter I Island DX'pedition. March will be the club's birthday celebration and awards ceremony. RARSfest will also be discussed at this meeting. Due to a scheduling conflict with the church, the March meeting will be held upstairs.

Unfinished Business

The Board took on the task of resolving issues concerning the RARS webpage and email lists. Steve KB4HDQ presented his concerns about his responsibilities with both items. The group discussed its desires of how the webpage and email lists should be handled and who should control or have access to each. The final consensus was that Steve KB4HDQ would be responsible for the content and password access to the RARS webpage. He will grant and oversee access to the

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Board Meeting - January 2007

webpage for the Treasurer (Greg KE4PAX), the Exciter editor (Courtney KI4HOS) and the Hamfest Chair (Hank K4HM). Jeff AC4ZO will be responsible for the content, membership and password control of the RARS email lists (rars-l and rarsboard-l). Dick W8HYD thanked everyone for their cooperation in working through these issues.

Committee Reports

Education – Virginia NC4VA provided the following reports:

- Plans for the Technician class are back to the drawing board. The Cisco site could not be secured for the class due to difficulties in using the facility on Saturdays. Virginia will investigate the possibility of using a facility at her church for 3 Saturday classes. A lead for using another company facility near NC State will also be investigated.
- Jeff Orrock KI4KKX has advised that he is available to conduct a NWS Radar Interpretation for Skywarn Spotters class at RARSfest.

Exciter – Courtney KI4HOS advised the February Exciter is in progress. The March issued will focus on the RARSfest. A general discussion followed about the availability of the Exciter. The target timeline should aim for availability a week before the monthly RARS meeting.

Membership – Mary Jo K4MJL asked the group for clarification of her job responsibilities. At present she is happy with her meet and greet responsibilities.

Public Information/FM – Gary KN4AQ reported the estate of W4JYV was interested in donating some ham equipment to a young ham and was looking for recommendations. The group suggested contacting Steve Jenkins KA8HXX for Powell Elementary. Virginia NC4VA also expressed interest in the equipment for her school.

Webmaster – Steve KB4HDQ reported the Exciter was last month's top hit getter for the website.

Hamfest – Hank K4HM advised a PDF version of the RARSfest flyer has been sent to the printer. He also reported that the Fairgrounds staff will require that different tickets be used for different admission prices (1 ticket type would be needed for pre sale and another for day of admission). A discussion of ideas for dealing with this requirement followed. Hank announced the next hamfest meeting will be held next Monday at Charlie's (WB4DCM) house. The RARSfest budget is falling in

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Board Meeting - January 2007

line. Issues, such as the need for a PA, test bench and talk-in still need to be worked out.

ARRL Liaison – Chuck K4HF reported there has been a lot of discussion concerning the changes in the Morse code requirement. The effective date of the change is still open since the change has not yet been listed in the National Register.

New Business

Chuck K4HF asked that a link to the Piedmont Chapter of the QCWA be placed on the RARS webpage. He reminded everyone of the net that takes place every Saturday morning on 3825 KHz at 8:45 am (local).

Dick W8HYD asked Board members to provide statements for responsibilities or job descriptions for their chairs / positions. This will aid with future members who accept these jobs. Dick recommended that we begin reviewing these descriptions over the next several Board meetings.

General Comments

Chuck K4HF announced the need for an Awards Committee for the March meeting. Dick W8HYD volunteered to help Chuck with this task.

Greg KE4PAX advised there are 7 members without access to email. Dick W8HYD advised he will print and distribute copies of the Exciter for these members.

Rod KI4LSN asked that we all consider ways to attract the new licensees to the club.

Dick KD4ISC reported that help is still needed for the following public service events;

- March 3 Odyssey of the Mind tournament at Wakefield Middle and High School
- March 24 MS Walk at RTP
- March 31 Odyssey of the Mind state tournament at Leesville High, Middle and Elementary schools.

Cliff AG4XR suggested invitations be mailed to members and hams in the community reminding them of the date and time of club meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.
Submitted by Dick Orander KD4ISC, Secretary

General Meeting - February 2007

Minutes of the RARS General Meeting for February 2007

The general meeting of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society was conducted on February 6, 2007 at the Forest Hills Baptist Church located on Dixie Trail.

Vice President Selene Montgomery, KG4RMT, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. President Dick Bitner, W8HYD, was absent due to illness.

Bob Conder K4RLC reported that Neal Fisher N4HAF is hospitalized after recent surgery and doing well with recovery.

Selene KG4RMT reported that Max Bloodworth KO4TV was hospitalized recently after a minor stroke. Max is now home recuperating.

Announcements:

- The next RARS dinner will be held on Tuesday, February 13 at the Golden Corral on Glenwood Avenue. All are invited to attend.
- The JARS auction will be held on Thursday, February 15. Registration begins at 6:15 pm and the meeting gets under way at 7:00 pm. Information can be found at www.jars.net.
- The Richmond Frost-fest will be held on February 18.
- VE testing will occur at tonight's meeting. Additional VE test sessions are scheduled on February 17 and 24 in Smithfield. There will also be a special test session held during the March RARS meeting.
- The Charlotte Hamfest will be held on March 10 and 11.

Brian Young KA9QJT announced the March 3 Odyssey of the Mind Eastern Regional Tournament. He is coordinating hams interested in providing communications support for the event which will be held at Wakefield Middle School. Those interested can contact Brian after the meeting or at ka9qjt@hotmail.com.

Dick Orander KD4ISC advised of the MS Walk at RTP on March 24 and the Odyssey of the Mind State Tournament on March 31 at Leesville High, Middle and Elementary schools. Plenty of hams are needed for these events. Those interested can contact Dick after the meeting or at kd4isc@arrl.net .

Wayne Starnes K4UV was recognized as our guest and welcomed to the meeting.

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General Meeting - January 2007

Selene KG4RMT provided these additional announcements:

- RARSfest will take place on Sunday, April 1 at the NC State Fairgrounds.
- The Dayton Hamvention will occur on May 18 – 20.
- The ADA Tour de Cure is scheduled for the second weekend in June.
- Field Day will take place on June 23 – 24.
- The March RARS meeting will be the club's birthday celebration and awards ceremony. There will also be a detailed RARSfest presentation.

Alan Pitegoff AB4OZ announced a special 10 meter net on 28.364 KHz will be conducted on Friday, February 23 at 8:30 pm. This net is being conducted to welcome those with new HF privileges due to the recent rule changes.

Selene KG4RMT read the Treasurer's report. There are 236 RARS members.

Hank Montgomery K4HM provided an update on the upcoming April 1 RARSfest. The event will be held in the new Expo building at the state fairgrounds. There are plans for another special event station (N4C) as well as a J-pole building station and foxhunt. Plenty of volunteer help is needed to make this event a success. Sign up sheets are on each table and more information can be found on the club's website – www.rars.org .

Door Prizes were won by Wayne Starnes K4UV and Bob Starkenburg W4TTX.

The floor was given to Wayne Starnes K4UV who presented the evening program on the 3Y0X Peter I Island DX'pedition. Wayne was a member of the team traveling to Peter I Island and provided a fascinating program of photos, video and personal experiences about the trip.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Attendance: 44

Dick Orander KD4ISC, RARS Secretary

Hamfests: Keeping Traditions Alive

Article by Lynn Lilla W9DJQ, Virginia Beach Hamfest President. Originally published in the "SERA Repeater Journal," reprinted here with the author's permission.

For those of you who knew Wayne Williams, K4MOB, I'm not trying to follow in his footsteps in reference to commenting on Hamfests. However, I feel the need to try to pass on the observation of over twenty years of Hamfest management to as many Hams as possible. In the beginning of my 42 years of amateur radio, in Chicago, I, and every Ham I knew, looked forward to those gatherings occurring a few times a year around the Chicago area. They were events that every Ham made plans for months in advance to ensure nothing interfered with those weekends.

Times have changed though. We are a busy people who have to make conscious decisions as to whether or not we can spare the time to go to one. The sad results of this are reflected in the attendance of the shows, which seem to get a little smaller with each year passing. One eye-opener for me was my visit to a small, but wonderful show presented each Spring in Chesapeake, VA. As I sat a table, promoting our Virginia Beach fall event, I had a stark realization that at my age, touching 60, I was a youngster compared to at least 80% of the attendees. It made me pay a little more attention to the attendees at the Virginia Beach show in September, which made me feel a little older than some of the crowd, but not much.

We had mailed out over 4,800 post cards, reminding all the Hams within the short radius of 70 miles of the Virginia Beach Hamfest. The attendance was less than 25% of that. What could have been more important than sharing a few hours with Hams within ground wave reception of each other? Obviously, there are numerous reasons, both good and unreasonable. It was raining? Nothing I needed to buy! No forums I wanted to listen to! No tailgating, or not enough of it! – and the list goes on.

There is one fact that I hope you all can understand. Most Hamfests are currently experiencing declining attendance. As interest and attendance goes down, so goes the decision for manufactures and vendors to attend shows. With less vendors, obviously more Hams find more reasons to not attend. Eventually, this evolution of degradation of shows will cause Hamfests to simply disappear. I hope it doesn't happen in my lifetime – or in yours, for that matter.

This is why we, who still love Hamfests, must all encourage every Ham we know to take part in this time-honored tradition. It's part of what being a Ham is all about. Without interest and attendance, our yearly event will soon be just a memory.

Amateur Radio Nets

The RARS Technical & Trader's net is held on Saturday evenings on the 146.64 after the 8 pm RARS net.

The VOIP Hurricane net is held Sundays at 00:00 UTC on the 146.775 repeater with a tone of 88.5 (IRLP node 4260). For information about activation details, go to www.voipwx.net.

Please join us on the **Carolina 440 net** every Monday night at 7:30 pm. This ragchew net utilizes 11 linked repeaters, spanning piedmont and eastern North Carolina. The net will also be connected to the Reflector 921 Channel 1 so other IRLP links can join in on the net.

These are the present frequencies and locations that you can use to access the net:

441.725+ (tone of 100.) Raleigh "Backbone Hub" repeater

442.075+ (tone of 88.5) Leland	443.075+ (tone of 100.) Clinton
444.150+ (tone of 100.) Clayton	444.325+ (tone of 100.) Holly Springs
444.375+ (tone of 100.) Henderson	444.550+ (tone of 100.) Coats
444.775+ (tone of 100.) Cary	444.775+ (tone of 131.8) Castle Hayne
444.875+ (tone of 100.) Wendell	444.925+ (tone of 100.) Durham

CAROLINA 440
UHF Link System
www.carolina440.net

If you would like your net information included in the *Exciter*, please contact the Editor.

Central Carolina SKYWARN

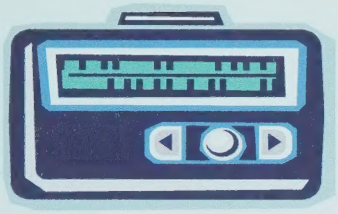
Please join us each Tuesday at 9:15 pm on the 146.88 repeater for the CCS net. On each net there are announcements, check-ins by county, and often a program or training spot. Check us out at www.centralcarolinaskywarn.net.

Upcoming CCS Information nets include:
March 13 — A severe weather topic TBA with NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist Jeff Orrock KI4KKX for Severe Weather Awareness Week.

March 20 — NWS News & Updates follows by a Q&A with Meteorologist-in-charge Darin Figurskey KC2IPY.

March 27— WRAL Severe Weather Operations with WRAL Chief Meteorologist Greg Fishel.

Please note that our website has changed. We are now located at www.centralcarolinaskywarn.net. Don't forget to change your bookmarks and linked pages!



Join the **Tarheel Short Wave Listening (SWL) Special Interest Group (SIG) net** on Monday evenings @ 9 pm on 146.64. We discuss *all* areas of radio monitoring and welcome your logs! We also have a SWL/SIG meeting on the third Monday of the month in addition to our regular net.

The **Mercury Amateur Radio Association Southeast 2 Meter Net** meets at 9 pm on the 145.13 repeater (tone 82.5). All stations are invited to participate in this net. MARA provides emergency communication support to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The purpose of this net is to assist ham radio operators in preparing to respond to emergencies, test their equipment, improve operating skills, pass traffic, and to provide those with a common interest an opportunity to meet.

The **Wake County ARES net** meets Thursdays around 2115 on the 146.88 repeater. We provide discussion and training for the implementation and provision of Emergency Communications for our served agencies, such as the American Red Cross and the local and state Emergency Operations Center. Please join us. www.wakeares.org.

The RARS
Exciter
Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc
PO Box 17124
Raleigh, North Carolina 27619

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Coming Soon:
The 35th Annual RARSFest!

Sunday, April 1, 2007 from 8 am - 3:30 pm
in the Exposition Center at the
North Carolina State Fairgrounds in Raleigh, NC

Northern Piedmont's Largest Hamfest
ARRL North Carolina State Convention

- ★ Free Parking
- ★ 50,000 sq. ft. — All Indoor
- ★ Climate-Controlled Facility
- ★ N4C Special Event Station
- ★ Build a J-Pole
- ★ Fox Hunt
- ★ Walk-In VE Testing
- ★ Prizes